



**CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA**  
**September 22, 2008**

**WATER/SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING (ADDED)**  
**4:30 p.m.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**“Millage Rate”**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**AMENDED**  
**AGENDA**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**
- II. **INVOCATION:** *Councilmember Deborah Hase*
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **ROLL CALL** **QUORUM: YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_**
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *September 8, 2008 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes*

**PRESENTATION:**

**ST MARYS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU AUTHORITY REPORT**

**LIBRARY BOARD REPORT**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- VI. **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:**
- VII. **OLD BUSINESS:** *NONE*
- VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - A. **BUDGET ORDINANCE:** *Public Works Bucket Truck*
- VIII. **REPORT OF AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES:**

- A. **HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: Board Member Removal & Term Expiration (Bryant & Mizelle)**
- B. **PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT**
- C. **ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT**
- D. **WATER/SEWER COMMITTEE REPORT (ADDED)**
- X. **REPORT OF MAYOR:**
- XI **REPORT OF CITY MANAGER:**
- XII. **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC**
- XIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Legal**
- XIV. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**“Millage Rate”**

**September 22, 2008**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

The Mayor and City Council for the City of St. Marys, Georgia met in a Public Hearing on Monday, September 22, 2008 in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

**PRESENT WERE:**

Mayor Rowland Eskridge  
Councilmember Greg Bird  
Councilmember William DeLoughy  
Councilmember Deborah Hase  
Councilmember Larry Johnson  
Councilmember Chuck Trader  
Councilmember Gull Weaver

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

William Shanahan, City Manager  
Max Tinsley, Asst. City Manager  
Amanda Blackledge, City Attorney  
Tim Hatch, Police Chief  
Bobby Marr, Public Works Director  
Chad Kinzly, Asst. Public Works Director  
Wiley King, Building Director  
Roger Weaver, Planning Director  
Robby Horton, Fire Chief  
Jennifer Brown, Finance Director  
Kim Dockery, Jr. Accountant  
Alyce Thornhill, Economic Dev. Director  
Shavon Gibbs, Court Administrator  
Janet Brinko, Tourism Director  
Donna Folsom, HR Director  
Bilaal Muhammad, City Marshal  
Nicole Goebel, IT Assistant  
Richard Riggle, Sergeant-At-Arms

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Eskridge called the public hearing to order at 5:30 p.m., and stated the purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comments in regards to the “2008 Millage Rate” advertised at 5.6 mills. The floor was opened to the public for questions and/or comments.

## **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC**

**John Morrissey**, resident questioned what would happen if the conditions of the economy became so severe that there was a budget shortfall, would there be a millage rate adjustment though the course of the year and if so, is Council preparing a catastrophe plan for the next 2-3 years to handle the budget and needs.

Councilmember DeLoughy responded that there would be no millage rate adjustment during the year. The Mayor and Councilmember's discussed the millage rate, last year's shortfall, fund equity, the current hiring freeze and continuous monthly reviews.

The City Manager gave a brief overview of the cuts made to the proposed budget from more than \$13 million to under \$11.8 million and eliminating 18 positions that were funded but unfilled. Other significant reductions were in supplies and equipment that the city could do without. Two adjusted budgets were presented to council for consideration. The first was for the advertised millage rate of 5.6 with a \$350,000 shortfall and the other was for 6.1 mills. Any further cuts would affect services to the citizens. In part, the slowdown was due to a decrease in Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) revenues when Cisco's closed for a number of months and sewer service was not available for the City's rapid growth. In an effort to keep spending to a minimum, the Assistant City Manager has been assigned to review all department budgets monthly. A plan is being prepared to perform a more detailed analysis of each department to review processes and procedures to ensure that operations run as efficiently as possible.

**Mark Lane**, business owner expressed concerns about commercial property values increasing between 35 and 50 percent during the reassessment, which has caused a substantial increase in property taxes. In the last six months, his business dropped off 25 percent and with an increase in the millage rate, this is driving businesses out of St. Marys.

**John Morrissey**, resident questioned what the impact would be if the mills were 5.1 and the long term philosophy about using reserve funds.

Councilmember's discussed cuts in services and staff positions if the millage rate was reduced; a 3 to 6 month reserve; leaving fund equity out of the budget; lack of state taxes and the value of a mill in St. Marys opposed to Kingsland and Woodbine.

**Patty Jackson**, resident commented on two recent fires and the effects on services if fire and police personnel were cut. Ms. Jackson urged Council to look at cutting employees that work from 8-5 not 24 hours.

**Frank Drane**, resident commented that the City should be run like a business by having long-term plans to generate new revenues, consolidate functions with the county, manager's analysis of departments and cutting staff during tough times.

The City Manager responded that in the past four years, council has lowered the millage rate and approved all fully justified staff hires. A city is not a business. It provides a service to the

community, not for a profit. An analysis of each department will be performed to identify the processes and what it takes to run the process at peak efficiency and ensure safety is not affected.

Mayor Eskridge stated that 18 positions were funded in several budgets that remain unfilled. Therefore, they were the first to be eliminated from the budget and the City's population increased over the past 5 years by 5,000 people.

**John Morrissey**, resident recommended inviting the county assessor to the next millage public hearings.

**Charlie Jacobs**, resident commended Councilmember's Hase and Bird for their efforts to not raise taxes. Mr. Jacobs commented on the newspaper articles regarding the city's budget, price increases on goods and how a tax increase would burden tax payers.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Eskridge declared the public hearing closed at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Darlene M. Roellig, City Clerk

**CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**September 22, 2008**  
**6:15 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

The Mayor and City Council for the City of St. Marys, Georgia met for its regular City Council session on Monday, September 22, 2008 in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

**PRESENT WERE:**

Mayor Rowland Eskridge  
Councilmember Greg Bird  
Councilmember William DeLoughy  
Councilmember Deborah Hase  
Councilmember Larry Johnson  
Councilmember Chuck Trader  
Councilmember Gull Weaver

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

William Shanahan, City Manager  
Max Tinsley, Asst. City Manager  
Amanda Blackledge, City Attorney  
Tim Hatch, Police Chief  
Bobby Marr, Public Works Director  
Chad Kinzly, Asst. Public Works Director  
Wiley King, Building Director  
Roger Weaver, Planning Director  
Robby Horton, Fire Chief  
Jennifer Brown, Finance Director  
Kim Dockery, Jr. Accountant  
Marsha Hershberger, Asst. Finance Director  
Alyce Thornhill, Economic Dev. Director  
Shavon Gibbs, Court Administrator  
Janet Brinko, Tourism Director  
Donna Folsom, HR Director  
Judy Armantrout, Library Director  
Bilaal Muhammad, City Marshal  
Nicole Goebel, IT Assistant  
Richard Riggle, Sergeant-At-Arms

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Eskridge called the City Council Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Councilmember Hase gave the invocation. Mayor Eskridge led the audience in the pledge of allegiance. Council roll call indicated a quorum of council members present for the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *September 8, 2008 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes*

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to approve the September 8, 2008 regular City Council meeting minutes. Councilmember Bird seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**PRESENTATION:**

**ST. MARYS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU AUTHORITY REPORT**

Mary Neff, Chairperson St. Marys Convention and Visitors Bureau Authority reported on conferences and training, activities, events, partnerships and accomplishments for the past year. Ms. Neff thanked the City for working together with the CVB and being good partners. A copy of the report is attached as part of the minutes.

Mayor Eskridge thanked the CVB for organizing the nice ceremony for the Cumberland Sound Ferry between the City of St. Marys and Fernandina Beach, Florida.

**LIBRARY BOARD REPORT**

Arlene Norris, Chairperson St Marys Library Board presented the report of the library's on-going activities, the wide range of books, videos and reference material for all ages and circulation. A copy of the report is attached as part of the minutes.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Councilmember DeLoughy made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Weaver seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:**

**Robert Arndt**, resident expressed concerns about cutting the fire department because of the national standard requirements and to ensure they are met for an efficient, effective and safe service. Mr. Arndt urged Council to defer making a decision until the studies are completed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no "Old Business" for Council consideration at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. BUDGET ORDINANCE:** *Public Works Bucket Truck*

The City Manager recommended approval of the budget ordinance to record funds received to cover damages to a public works bucket truck. Payment was received from the insurance company in the amount of \$11,594.07 for damages to the city's bucket truck involved in an accident on July 8, 2008. The City had loaned the bucket truck to the City of Kingsland in order to perform maintenance on the traffic light at the intersections of Gross Road and Laurel Island Parkway. A truck driver misjudged the

distance between his trailer and the boom of our bucket truck while attempting to make a turn, and hit our truck. Our employee and a Kingsland employee were in the bucket when the accident occurred. A Kingsland police officer was also on the scene directing traffic at the time of the accident. A budget ordinance is necessary to record the receipt of these funds.

Councilmember Hase made a motion to approve the budget ordinance for the public works bucket truck repairs. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

## **REPORT OF AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES:**

### **A. HOSPITAL AUTHORITY: *Board Member Removal & Term Expiration (Bryant & Mizelle)***

Mayor Eskridge stated that the Hospital Authority Board recommended the removal of Gail Bryant due to lack of attendance.

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to remove Gail Bryant from the Hospital Authority Board. Councilmember Trader seconded the motion. Councilmember DeLoughy questioned whether Ms. Bryant had been notified about the removal. Mayor Eskridge stated that Mr. Mizelle was in the audience, shaking his head "yes". Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mayor Eskridge announced that Ms. Bryant's seat was now vacant and Mr. Mizelle's term expires in October. Anyone interested in the appointments should provide a letter of intent to the City Clerk's office before the next council meeting. The Mayor also asked Mr. Mizelle to provide a copy of the proposed By-Law changes to Council for approval. Mr. Mizelle stated that the proposed By-Laws were submitted to the City Attorney and the state for the extension of the terms for an additional year to coincide with councilmember terms. The City Attorney responded that what is need is the most recent resolution to be submitted for review. Council appoints members and staggered terms through a City resolution and the actual by-laws, in terms of numbers, could be changed internally by the organization. In order to approve the term extension a resolution must be submitted to Council for approval.

### **B. PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilmember Weaver reported on the proposed lease agreement for the US Coast Guard facility that is up for renewal. The Finance Director has researched the proposed fair market value of the property verses the Coast Guards Current offer. The lease is for the final two payments of \$37,752.20 for the remainder of the year. A new lease for 2009 is proposed in the amount of \$19,265.50 per month with an increase of 3% for fiscal years 2010-2013.

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the lease, after review by the City Attorney. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Councilmember Bird commented for clarification that the Coast Guard has been paying

\$435,000 per year, which this year will finish at close to the same rate. Starting next year, it will drop to \$269,000. Councilmember DeLoughy stated that improvements to the facility were included in the \$435,000, plus a stipend. The reason for the reduction is because next year's payments are only for the normal rent. Councilmember Weaver stated that the Coast Guard is very pleased to be in St. Marys, working with the St. Marys Police Department and appreciates the welcome and hospitality. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**C. ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilmember Weaver stated that an Ethics Committee meeting is scheduled on October 7, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

**D. WATER/SEWER COMMITTEE REPORT (ADDED)**

Councilmember Trader stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review and amend the developer's agreement between St. Marys Land Development and the City of St. Marys. The project was delayed because the City did not have the capacity to support it. The project is for 125 low income duplex and triplex units that will sell for approximately \$129,000. The Committee has come to an agreement for the construction fee that is being recommended to Council with the City Attorney preparing revisions to Exhibit "B". It will allow for adjustment of the building permitting phase and the construction fees as follows:

- Phase I - payment of the construction fee in the amount of \$34,000 payable at a rate of \$1,000 per unit as building permits are issued on each building. The full amount of \$34,000 must be paid on or before the last day of March 2009. A timeline for the payment of construction fees will be tied to the commencement of the attached timeline.
- Phase II - payment of a lump sum amount of \$51,200, so long as the payment is made on or before the last day of March 2009.
- Phase III - payment of a lump sum amount of \$69,000, so long as the payment is made on or before the last day of August 2009.
- Phase IV - payment of the construction fee in a lump sum amount of \$87,000, so long as the payment is made on or before the last day of January 2010.

If any of the payments do not occur on or before the above due dates, the **construction fee** will revert to the current fee amount in effect at the time. Councilmember Trader clarified that this is a construction fee. It does not include the tap fees that are paid as part of construction. The Committee proposed that the agreement prepared by the City Attorney be reviewed and approved by two (2) members of the Water Sewer Committee before the document is executed by the parties.

Councilmember Trader made a motion to approve the adjustment to the agreement as presented. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Councilmember Bird objected to receiving this information tonight for over \$244,000 in fees and questioned the 30% discounted rate. In the future, he requests time to review such proposals.

Councilmember Trader stated that it was discounted and it is not unusual for a developer to bring it before the Committee to review the developer's agreement when a number of units are involved. The Committee negotiates agreements with the developers when there are exceptions to the standards that work best for the city and the developer. St. Marys Land Development spent a significant investment on infrastructure on this project. The reason for it being last minute was that the underlying financing of the deal has shifted and permit fees were due in September, so the project could not move forward unless the agreement was reevaluated. Councilmember DeLoughy stated that the project was delayed because of a lack of city water and sewer capacity. Developer agreements were negotiated in the past with developers in the same situation who had started the project before construction fees were implemented. This is the last developer in this position.

**Steve Irwin**, St. Marys Land Development stated that he made the offer on the property in May 2005. In September 2005, they closed on the property. During October 2005, a land disturbing permit was approved which was followed by ground clearing and construction financing. Due to the lack of sewer, which they were not aware of, over \$100,000 in fees were paid for blue prints and engineering services that were now obsolete. In excess of \$100,000 in interest fees on money borrowed and other expenses was also paid to build the project. Following much discussion, voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

### **REPORT OF MAYOR:**

September 11, 2008 – Met with Department of Transportation regarding the Colerain Road Widening Project

September 15, 2008 – Attended the Ethics and Property Committee meetings

September 16, 2008 – Met with Senate hopeful Mr. Gillespie

September 19, 2008 – Attended the Cumberland Sound Ferry ceremony in St. Marys and Fernandina Beach, Florida

Author Charles Martin will be in St. Marys on Saturday, September 27, 2008 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for a book reading and signing of "Where the River Ends", which is a story about the St. Marys Community.

Mayor Eskridge announced the calendar of events, activities and meetings.

### **REPORT OF CITY MANAGER:**

- Pre-Construction meeting was held for the 4.0 Million Gallons per Day (MDG) upgrade to the Point Peter Waste Water Treatment Plant and the permit was approved. While work has never stopped, the official start-up date is September 22, 2008. The ground disturbance permit has been approved by Environmental Protection Division (EPD).
- Public Works responded to a sewer back-up problem on the evening of September 16, 2008 in the Crooked River Development.
- The St. Marys Fire Department responded to a fire at Papa Luigi's Pizza Restaurant on the morning of September 17, 2008. All firefighters did a great job. There were 40 responders that included Kingsland, the county and base. The fire was contained and

only damaged the inside of the restaurant. St. Marys Fire Department and all other responders did an outstanding job.

- A study was conducted on the fire station and the water tower at the airport to research what the city owned. The City owns the fire station and water tower but the training facility is on airport property.
- Spoke with Allen Burns, Executive Director Regional Development Center (RDC) in reference to the Regional Comprehensive Plan. There are very strict tasks and levels that the City needs to follow in order to apply for grants. The RDC has requested that the tasks be generalized for the first 3-4 years to allow time for the local governments to get familiar with the regulations.
- Met with Burt Wilkerson, HUD Director to discuss and tour Cumberland Oaks Development. Recently, an inspection was performed at the development and the findings will be forth coming.

### **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:**

**Keith Post**, resident gave a brief history of the US Coast Guard Maritime Safety & Security Team (MSST) and requested a Joint Proclamation for Admiral Thad W. Allen Day on October 27, 2008. Mr. Post urged citizens to come to the Rock Shrimp Festival on October 4<sup>th</sup> and the book reading and signing of “Where the River Ends” on September 27<sup>th</sup> .

**Louie Casey**, resident introduced himself to Council as a candidate for the Hospital Authority Board.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** *Legal*

Councilmember DeLoughy made a motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss legal. Councilmember Trader seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Mayor and Council adjourned to executive session at 7:26 p.m., returning at 7:48 p.m. with Mayor Eskridge calling the Council meeting back to order.

### **LEGAL**

Councilmember Trader made a motion to direct the City Attorney to take any and all action including calling the bonds but not limited to any other action to protect the City against any liability that could be associated with Cumberland Harbour or any related entities.

Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Bird made a motion for adjournment. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Mayor Eskridge declared the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Darlene M. Roellig, City Clerk